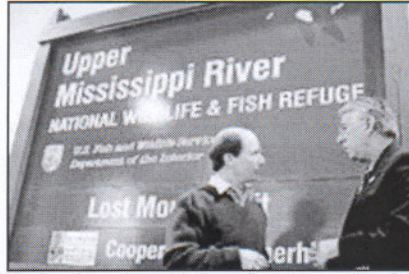


# THE GALENA GAZETTE

Home of President & Civil War Hero General Ulysses S. Grant



Ed Britton, Savanna district manager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service talks with Rep. Don Manzullo after the dedication of the Lost Mound Unit of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. A dedication ceremony for the 9,404 acres of land was held on Tuesday, April 13 at the Eagles Landing Welcome Center at the former Army Depot north of Savanna. Digital photo by Amy Alderman

## Lost Mound is official

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

By Amy Alderman

The Lost Mound Unit, formerly the Savanna Army Depot, of the Upper Mississippi River is now official.

Rep. Don Manzullo with Ed Britton, Savanna, district manager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and nine representatives of intergovernmental parties dedicated the 9,404 acre land and water preserve at a ceremony on Tuesday April, 13.

"People can now realize what we have here and we can return the Savanna Army Depot to the community and its people," said Manzullo at the ceremony held at the Eagles Landing Welcome Center in Savanna.

Lost Mound is now open to the public for fishing, hiking and research. The refuge which borders the Mississippi River is rich with sand prairie/sand savanna and endangered plant and animal life.

Parcels of the preserve are still off limits due to contamination on the grounds. The former army depot was a munitions manufacturing and testing ground as well as an ammunitions training academy from 1917 to the base's closure in 2000. It has taken more than 15 years of sampling, research and contamination clean-up efforts to classify the land as transferable for public use.

A group was formed in 2000 called the Strategic Management, Analysis, Requirements and Technology, or SMART team, which rallied the efforts of intergovernmental parties to devise a plan for clean up and land transfer.

The SMART team was organized among representatives of the Army, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. FWS, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Jo-Carroll Depot Local Redevelopment Authority.

The representatives of the SMART team have met several times a year to update clean-up priorities and identify avenues for funding projects.

Without the cooperation among the offices, many at the conference on Tuesday agreed the dedication of Lost Mound would not have been possible.

"By working together, we can continue to move forward for this place," said Brian Anderson director of the office of resource conservation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Notably, the group is ready to take action and elated about the largest land transfer at the former depot.

"We are tired of talking about doing things. That is what today is about," said Britton.

New signs are being installed along IL 84 and within the Eagle's Landing Development to direct people to the U.S. FWS and Illinois Department of Natural Resources offices.

Alan Anderson, Lost Mound Unit director for the Upper Mississippi refuge is available at the U.S. FWS office five days a week. A couple of full-time staff members will be added this year to work in bio-technology, and four high school students also work through the summer.

In addition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, many conservation groups such as the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges, the Natural Area Guardians and Audubon Societies have made Lost Mound a second home for hiking, stargazing, fishing and birdwatching.

"This is a healthy environment for the community and a healthy community in the environment," said Tom Barounis, remedial site manager for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.